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RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 2507
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0319
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000425

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EUR/WE FOR ANGELA CERVETTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [SP](#) [XA](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: AFRICOM SHOULD ENGAGE AFRICAN UNION

REF: A. STATE 14457

[1](#)B. MADRID 383

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) At a meeting on a range of issues with Spanish Director General for Foreign Policy Rafael Dezcallar on February 2, the DCM raised the recent announcement of the creation of U.S. Combatant Command Africa (AFRICOM) and told Dezcallar that the U.S. would appreciate Spain's input, advice and cooperation on this major new initiative. The DCM told Dezcallar that AFRICOM would greatly improve the coordination, capacity, and effectiveness of U.S. and multilateral missions in Africa, be they military or humanitarian. While the U.S. has no difficulty in projecting itself strategically in Africa, the creation of AFRICOM shows U.S. commitment to the region and will enhance our long-term capacity. The U.S. wants Spain's input on the initiative both because of Spanish strategic interest in Africa and because of the impact the command could have for U.S. military assets in Spain.

[1](#)2. (C) Dezcallar thanked the DCM for the points, promised to pass them to the Ministry of Defense for consideration and suggested that the Embassy also contact the Director General for Africa, Alvaro Iranzo. (NOTE: post has shared the AFRICOM points with Iranzo and his deputy for Africa, ref B. Embassy also delivered ref A points to MOD Deputy Director General for Int'l Policy Enrique Perez Ramirez on February 15. Perez Ramirez asked to be kept informed, but did not offer a substantive response. END NOTE.) Dezcallar said he had once visited a U.S. facility in Djibouti and had been impressed with U.S. operations and Djibouti's strategic importance. He said that Spain would be interested to know whether the U.S. has coordinated this initiative with major African nations such as Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa, as AFRICOM could open the U.S. to criticism inside Africa. He said it would be critical to have these nations on board prior to moving forward with the command.

[1](#)3. (C) Lastly, Dezcallar noted the importance of supporting the African Union (AU). He acknowledged that the AU lacked capacity and effectiveness at the working level while noting that its senior leaders are excellent. Dezcallar said that the AU is the only body that has legitimacy to enter into certain conflicts in Africa, which means that the international community should commit to investing in its development as a sound international institution. A major U.S. commitment such as AFRICOM might also compel a reexamination of the U.S. commitment to the AU, Dezcallar

said, because investment in African institutions and peacekeeping capabilities is the only way to bring an end to difficult, costly and unpopular peacekeeping interventions by Western nations.

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